



Looked After Children (LAC) & Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Encourage learners to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their personal, social and emotional development
- Ensure that learners experience high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the legislation requirements
- Plan support for LAC and PLAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life
- Help learners develop their cultural, moral and social understanding

2. Legislation, statutory requirements and statutory guidance

This policy is based on legislation and advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and learner referral units in England'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2022) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and learner referral units in England, including learner movement'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behavioural Support Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy (Learners)
- Safeguarding Policy

Definitions

'Looked After Children (LAC)' are defined as:

Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.

Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.

Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.

Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA (under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989) in agreement with their parents.

‘Previously-Looked After Children’ are defined as:

Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

3. Our Principles

This is a statement of principles, not practice. Practical applications of these principles are the responsibility of the Headteacher. The Cann Bridge Governing Board believe that high expectations and aspirations for our LAC and PLAC learners lie at the heart of a successful school and enable children to make the best possible progress, developing each learners’ communication and independence to prepare them to actively contribute to the wider world and leading to healthy and fulfilled lives.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Virtual School Headteacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority’s LAC, including those placed out-of-authority
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and PLAC
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date report of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the headteacher and DT if they have a learner on roll who is looked after by the LA
 - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities in a learner’s PEP
 - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC

- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision
- Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures

The Cann Bridge Headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
- Allowing the Designated Teacher time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties and ensuring the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC and PLAC in the school.
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC and PLAC is a key priority
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC and PLAC
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other learner groups
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other learner groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other learner groups

The Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC and PLAC is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the virtual school understand the support available to LAC and PLAC
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for tuition and additional support

- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored
- Working with the child's virtual school, social worker and other involved professionals to develop and implement their PEP
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC in their class; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales
- Acting as the main contact for caregivers – the people who are in contact with the child in the home setting on a daily basis, ensuring good communication between home and school
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets
- Providing information and updates to contribute to the PEP paperwork to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Knowing the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC
- Appointing a named governor for LAC and PLAC (Safeguarding Link Governor) who will work in co-operation with the Headteacher and Designated Teacher (DT) to implement this policy
- Ensuring that the school has a DT, and that the DT has the necessary time, resources and training to be able to carry out his or her responsibilities
- Ensuring that LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- Allocating resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC

The governing body should receive an annual report which includes information on the number of LAC and PLAC learners on roll; LAC attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other learners; Progress and attainment, as a discrete group, compared to other learners; The number of fixed-term exclusions; The destinations of LAC learners who leave the school. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the learners concerned.

All school staff should:

- Be aware of LAC and PLAC
- Preserve confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLAC.
- Being inclusive with all on-site and off-site activities
- Be aware of the impact of trauma (including abuse, neglect, loss and separation) on children's development and their ability to build relationships, and how this might affect their behaviour
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all learners and work to ensure they achieve stability and success at school

- Understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC as individuals, but not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their LAC or PLAC status
- Use effective classroom strategies to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC and be aware that some curriculum content may trigger difficult emotions in the home setting
- Keep the DT informed about LAC and PLAC progress, respond promptly to requests for information and discuss any concerns about barriers to learning
- Engage with relevant training that is offered to enable them to work effectively with LAC and PLAC

5. Admissions

Cann Bridge School welcomes all LAC. All LAC and PLAC should have the highest priority within school admission arrangements, Cann Bridge admissions are coordinated with the Local Authority. The school recognises that LAC and PLAC are an 'excepted group' and will be prioritised in oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Due to care placement changes, LAC children may enter the school mid-term. It is vital that these learners are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the learner settle.

6. Safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and virtual school. Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver

7. Personalised Education Plan (PEP)

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a learner to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages. The PEP will address the learner's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to the appropriate provision
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.

The PEP will be reviewed and updated 3 times a year.

8. Working with agencies and the Virtual School

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the involved social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers. The school will coordinate their review meetings. The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and PLAC. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child using an individualised Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP). The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC will communicate with the virtual school and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP. Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the virtual school, the allocated social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay. The designated teacher will communicate with the virtual school and agree on how learner premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress. Any PP+ funding for PLAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the relevant virtual school to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or PLAC, and according to their needs.

If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the virtual school regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation. The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and previously-LAC.

9. Learner Mental Health

LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health. The designated teacher will work with the virtual school to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary. The school's mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and PLAC, and will always either be a member of, or supported by the senior leadership team or DSL.

10. Suspensions and exclusions

Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's behaviour policy. Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and the virtual school have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the learner's education in the event of exclusion. The school will inform parents (where appropriate) and caregivers so that they

can seek the advice of the virtual school on strategies to support the child to avoid exclusion. Where a LAC is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the virtual school as soon as possible. The virtual school will work with the designated teacher and other relevant individuals to consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the learner's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

11. Part Time Timetables

All LAC and PLAC of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a learner's best interests, and with the full agreement of the Virtual School, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a learner from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a learner's behaviour. A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the learner is expected to attend full-time. We will ensure there are formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the learner and their parents/carers and social worker. All part-time timetables are recorded with the local authority and reviewed every 6 weeks.

12. Learners with SEND

The class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the virtual school will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-LAC. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met.

The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and PLAC and how data will remain secure.
- How learners and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual learners is passed between authorities, departments and the school when learners move.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every year. Yearly reviews will be carried out by the Headteacher and Governors as part of the Safeguarding Review. Governors receive a yearly report from the DT. The Virtual School Headteacher will monitor PEPs and where applicable will do drop in visits.